

REMARKS

Claims 40-48, 50, 57-63 and 70 are pending herein.

1. Examiner O'Hern is thanked for courtesies extended during several telephonic interviews, including the telephonic interviews conducted on June 3, 2009. During the interviews, it was agreed that the amendments herein to claim 40 remove the remaining art rejections contained in the Office Action. As discussed, the prior art does not teach or suggest a ceramic component, having a ceramic body comprising silicon carbide and an oxide layer, the oxide layer formed by oxidation of the ceramic body having a coating of alumina, the alumina having a particle size less than 1.0 micron. The claimed invention is further characterized by the oxide layer containing an amorphous phase and a crystalline phase forming an adherent (i.e., well bonded), uniform (i.e., consistent in nature, free of extended cracked or crazed regions) and conformal layer covering the ceramic body. By way of review, the declaration by Dr. Bryden filed June 18, 2008 shows that the prior art (Sonntag) relied upon by the PTO is characterized by extended regions that are defined by cracked or crazed areas showing a non-uniform, poorly adhered, non-conformal structure.

2. The pending claims were previously rejected under §103 over Sonntag in view of Hida, and in further view of additional secondary references (Dussaulx et al., and Hillig). As discussed above, it was agreed that the art rejections would be withdrawn in light of the amendments to the present claims, as Sonntag does not disclose or suggest the claimed invention, and the secondary references fail to cure the deficiencies of Sonntag.

3. Applicants note that support for the claim amendments may be found throughout the specification. For example, paragraph [1009] clearly describes the concept of oxidizing the ceramic body in the presence of submicron alumina and paragraphs [1030] and [1032] describe an oxide layer forming a uniform, conformal layer that is adherent, resisting spalling and flaking.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Examiner O'Hern is requested to issue a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims.

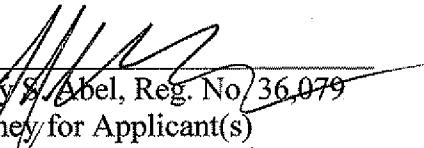
Should Examiner O'Hern deem that any further action by the Applicant would be desirable for placing this application in even better condition for issue, he is requested to telephone Applicant's undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Applicant does not believe that any additional fees are due, but if the Commissioner believes additional fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 50-3797.

Respectfully submitted,

Date

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